

U.S. Department of Justice
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Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

May 11, 2004

RE: UNITED STATES v. WILLIAM BYRD

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today that William Byrd, was sentenced to a 300 month term of imprisonment by the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of New York. In July of 2000, Byrd, following an extensive investigation by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, pled guilty to conspiring to distribute over a pound cocaine base ("crack").

Following Byrd's plea, however, the government obtained information that Byrd was complicit in two shooting homicides which occurred in 1997.

Assistant U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy, Jr., who handled the case, stated that an extensive sentencing hearing was conducted, after which the Court concluded that the government had carried its burden of proving that the defendant participated in both the July 31, 1997, murder of Jeron Reed a/k/a "Froot", in the vicinity of Trinidad Park, at the corner of Monticello and Trinidad Streets, as well as the December 12, 1997, murder of William R. Brown, outside of his mother's home on Best Street. According to Kennedy, both homicides were committed with AK-47 semi-automatic firearms.

In concluding that the government proved the defendant's involvement in both homicides, the Court, granted the government's motion to be relieved of its obligations under the plea agreement, and found that defendant's criminal history category underrepresented the seriousness of defendant's past criminal conduct. As a result of the Court's findings, the defendant's sentencing range was increased from the 87 to 108 months originally contemplated under the plea agreement, to a range of 292 to 365 months.

The conviction and sentencing was the culmination of an investigation on the part of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Mark T. Peterson, Resident Agent-in-Charge.

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